Eye Safety At Work

Is Everyone's Business.

Healthy People 2010 Vision

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National Eye Institute

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health NIOSH

CDC Workplace Safety and Health

National Safety Council

Eye Safety in Your Workplace

Creating and maintaining a safe working environment is the responsibility of employers and employees. It is a team effort!

- Employers are required to conduct an eye hazard assessment and use engineering controls to remove or minimize hazards where possible.
- Employers are required to provide properly fitting protective eyewear appropriate to the job when an eye hazard exists and to ensure that workers use the eyewear.
- Employers and employees should use protective eyewear when at the worksite or in an area with eye hazards.
- Everyone should be on the lookout for new eye hazards. If new hazards are identified or if appropriate protective eyewear is not available or is missing, notify your supervisor.
- When protective eyewear is a part of your job, make a habit of wearing it and encourage your coworkers to use it, too. Protective eyewear is an important tool of your trade.

Eye Safety At Work Is Everyone's Business!

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Why Is Eye Safety Important?

Eye injuries impact everyone, not just the injured worker.

- Why is eye safety important? It's the law! Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require that employers provide a safe work environment, which includes supplying the appropriate personal protective eyewear.
- For workers, eye injuries may lead to pain and discomfort, medical costs, lost work time, lost wages, and even permanent disability.
- For employers, eye injuries may impact productivity, worker morale, and compensation costs.
- An eye injury at work may severely impact daily living, family interactions, recreational activities, and one's enjoyment of life.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Workplace Eye Injury Facts

Each day, about 2,000 U.S. workers have a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment.

- Eye injuries are common in all industries, but workers in construction, mining, agriculture, and manufacturing have the highest rates of eye injuries on the job.
- Men have about 80 percent of work-related eye injuries. Among workers treated in an emergency department, men had an eye injury rate 4 times higher than women.
- Workers less than 45 years of age have an eye injury rate almost 3 times higher than older workers.
- Each day, more than 100 eye injuries result in a day or more of lost work time.

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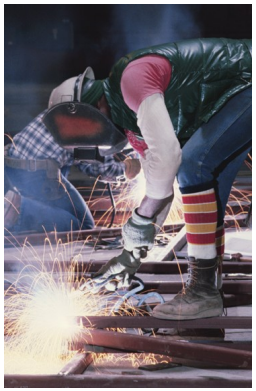
Common Causes of Eye Injuries

The most prevalent sources of eye injuries include the following:

- Scrap materials, waste, and windblown dust
- Flying material particles or slivers from wood, metal, plastic, and cement
- Chemicals or chemical products
- Falling or misdirected objects
- UV light from welding torches.



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Types of Eye Protection

The proper type of eye protection must be selected to match the type of hazard.

- The most common types of eye protection include the following:
  - Safety glasses with side protection/shields
  - Goggles
  - Faceshields
  - Welding helmets
  - Full-face respirators.

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Types of Eye Protection

- Safety glasses are designed to withstand impact from common workplace hazards and to provide the minimum level of protection required in the workplace.
- Safety glasses with side protection are required any time there are hazards from flying particles or objects such as minor dust or chips.
- Safety glasses are commonly used as protection against impact and low-intensity optical radiation from soldering and the sun.

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Types of Eye Protection

- Goggles are stronger than safety glasses and are used for protection from high impacts, particles, chemical splashes, and welding light.
- Faceshields are used for even higher impact tasks and protect the wearer's face and eyes from dangers such as critical chemicals and bloodborne hazards.
- Welding helmets protect the user from the intensity of welding light, which can cause severe burns to the eye and surrounding tissue.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Selecting Appropriate Protective Eyewear

- Per OSHA regulations, all protective eyewear must meet the ANSI Z87.1 Eye and Face Protection Standards.
- Safety eyewear must have “Z87” or “Z87+” marked on the frame and, in some cases, the lens.
- Safety eyewear with polycarbonate lenses affords the highest impact resistance and greater eye safety (marked Z87+).
- Protective eyewear should be properly fitted and comfortable to wear.
- When other personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a half-face respirator is required, protective eyewear must be selected to fit so that both types of PPE work properly.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Selecting Appropriate Protective Eyewear

- Glasses that are not snug against the face create gaps in protection. The biggest gaps are usually near the corners of the glasses and allow more exposure to hazards coming at an angle from above or below.
- Adjustable-temple glasses, eyewear retainers, and straps help hold the glasses
  in the proper position, close to the face.
- Safety glasses have hard or soft nose pieces, padded temples, and a variety of other features that improve comfort without adding great cost.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Caring for Your Protective Eyewear

- Care for your protective eyewear in a manner that will extend the life of your equipment and help to ensure that it provides the maximum protection when you need it the most!
- Use polycarbonate lenses with anti-scratch coating.
- Wear an eyewear retainer strap that will let the glasses hang around your neck when not in use.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Caring for Your Protective Eyewear

- Store protective eyewear in a case or an old sock before tossing them into a tool chest or the seat of a car or pickup.
- Clean your protective eyewear with eyeglass cleaning solutions, or wash and wipe them with a soft, clean cloth.
- Use anti-fog solutions to keep your lenses from fogging.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Reducing Workplace Eye Injuries

<u>Proper selection and use of eye and face protection</u> will help prevent eye injuries. Other precautions that employers and employees can take to reduce the risk of eye injury include the following:

- Ensure that the appropriate eye protection is available at the worksite.
- Keep bystanders out of work areas and/or behind protective barriers.
- Use your tools properly and keep them in good working order.
- Use caution flags to identify potential hazards, such as hanging or protruding objects.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Reducing Workplace Eye Injuries

- Do not remove your protective eyewear until you leave the site or are out of the hazard zone. After you have finished with a tool or specific task, there still may be hazardous materials around you from other workers.
- Consult your supervisor if you have any doubt about the type of eye protection needed for a job or specific location.
- Contact lens users should wear goggles or full-face respirators in dust-laden or chemical environments. If your contacts feel gritty or are irritating you, remove them immediately. Have a pair of prescription eyeglasses available if you need to remove your contacts while working.

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Caring for Eye Injuries

Knowing what to do in an emergency may save your vision and/or the vision of your coworkers.

- Know the locations of eyewash stations in your workplace.
- Keep emergency sterile eyewash solutions accessible to you, your coworkers, and employees.
- Understand basic first-aid techniques.

Prevent Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Basic First-Aid Techniques

Basic first-aid techniques include the following:

- **Specks in the eye**
  - Do not rub the eye.
  - Flush the eye with a large amount of water.
  - See a doctor if the speck does not wash out, or if pain or redness continues.
- **Cuts, punctures, or objects stuck in the eye**
  - Do not wash out the eye.
  - Do not try to remove an object stuck in the eye.
  - See a doctor at once.

First-aid advice courtesy of Prevent Blindness America

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More First-Aid Techniques

- **Chemical burns**
  - Flush the eye immediately with water or any drinkable liquid and continue flushing for at least 15 minutes. For caustic or basic solutions, continue flushing while en route to the doctor.
  - Flush the eye even if it has a contact lens. Flushing over the lens may dislodge it.
  - See a doctor at once.
- **Blows to the eye**
  - Apply a cold compress without pressure.
  - Tape a plastic bag containing crushed ice to the forehead and let it rest gently on the injured eye.
  - See a doctor at once in cases of continued pain, reduced vision, blood in the eye, or discoloration, which can mean internal eye damage.

First-aid advice courtesy of Prevent Blindness America

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Make Eye Safety

Your Business.

For more information, call 1-800-35-NIOSH

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